

The 2008 Farm Bill

- Reinforces the importance of conservation on working lands.
- Increases the nation's investment in conservation programs administered by NRCS by \$4.2 billion over the life of the 2008 Farm Bill. *(That's an increase of more than 38% over the 2002 Farm Bill!)*
- Builds on historic commitment to conservation in the 2002 Farm Bill.

Pennsylvania Conservation Programs

* All programs are voluntary

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) -

Provides financial and technical assistance to farmers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial incentives to producers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers and meet federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) -

Provides payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations. Producers may construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures, and implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) -

Provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily implement conservation practices to minimize nutrient and sediment losses in order to restore, preserve, and protect local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay. Private agriculture land located within the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed is eligible; selected watersheds will receive priority.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) -

Encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by compensating producers for installing and adopting additional conservation activities; improving, maintaining, and managing conservation activities in place at the time the contract offer is accepted; adopting resource-conserving crop rotations; engaging in on-farm conservation research and demonstration activities, and pilot testing of new technologies or innovative conservation practices.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) -

A voluntary program for private landowners to develop and improve high quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of national, state, and local significance. Through WHIP, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) -

Provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. Includes 10-year and 30-year agreements, permanent easement options, and funding for restoration.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Reduces soil erosion and sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. *CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency, with NRCS providing technical land eligibility determinations, conservation planning, and practice implementation.*

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) - A program for landowners and operators to protect, restore, and enhance grassland including pastureland, shrubland, and certain other lands. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

(FRPP) - Helps farmers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to state or local governments, and non-governmental organizations with existing farm protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

Conservation Opportunities for Minority Farmers, Beginning Farmers, and Limited Resource Farmers

- The 2008 Farm Bill continues to address the unique circumstances and concerns of minority farmers, as well as beginning and limited resource farmers. It provides for voluntary participation, offers incentives, and focuses on equity in accessing USDA programs and services. Enhancements include streamlined delivery of technical and financial assistance; improved programs and services; and flexibility in decision making (with most decisions made at the state or local level).